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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/613,207	07/03/2003	Cary Lee Bates	ROC920000069US2	4591

7590 05/26/2006

IBM Corporation  
Intellectual Property Law  
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3605 Highway 52 North  
Rochester, MN 55901-7829

EXAMINER
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ENG, DAVID Y

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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2155

DATE MAILED: 05/26/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

<b>Office Action Summary</b>	<b>Application No.</b>	<b>Applicant(s)</b>	
	10/613,207	BATES ET AL.	
	<b>Examiner</b>	<b>Art Unit</b>	
	DAVID Y. ENG	2155	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --  
**Period for Reply**

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

**Status**

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on \_\_\_\_.
- 2a) ☐ This action is FINAL.                      2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

**Disposition of Claims**

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-16 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-16 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

**Application Papers**

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 03 July 2003 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.  
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

**Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119**

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All    b) ☐ Some \* c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- \* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

**Attachment(s)**

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)  | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)<br>Paper No(s)/Mail Date. ____. |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)                                   | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)             |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)<br>Paper No(s)/Mail Date ____. | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: ____.  |

Claims 1-16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

In claim 1, there is no antecedent basis for "the opened delegate reply message". Line 4 of claim 14 has similar defect.

The term "substantially the same" in claim 2 is vague and indefinite. Line 3 of claims 14 and 16 have similar defect. Further with respect to claim 2, there is no antecedent basis for "message identifier".

In claim 3, it is not clear what kind of readable medium it is referring to. Applicants are suggested to insert "storage" before "medium". Claim 15 has similar defect. Further with respect to claim 3, the claim combination only delete the related delegate reply message and not the delegate message as call for in the preamble. It is not clear what a "related delegate reply message is".

With respect to the independent claims 4-14, it is not clear how the steps in the dependent claims are functionally related to the steps of their parent claim and in what order with respect to the parent claim those steps are executed. The independent claims should refer to the particular step in parent claim if the dependent claim further limits the particular step. For example, the first step in dependent claim 4 should refer to the first step in parent claim 3 because the step of claim 4 further limits the step of claim 3.

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

Art Unit: 2155

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 1 and 15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ayyadurai (USP 6,668,281).

See at least the abstract and lines 7-11 of column 2 in Ayyadurai. Ayyadurai teaches a system capable of sending and receiving emails including auto-reply mails. The system also is capable of auto-deleting any received emails including auto-reply emails. From the teaching of Ayyadurai, it would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art to have the received auto-reply mails automatically deleted if the received amount is large such that the recipient does not have to delete them.

Claims 2-14 and 16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ayyadurai (USP 6,668,281) in view of Hall (USP 6,915,334).

As to claims 2-7, 10-14 and 16, Ayyadurai teaches claim combination set forth above. Ayyadurai does not teach deleting emails if the emails have the same message identifier. See lines 1-2 of column 2 in Hall. Hall teaches an email system that is capable of deleting emails received more than once. It would have been obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art to delete email messages received more than once so that the mails are unique and not redundant. Note also that emails of the same copy have the same message identifier.

As to claims 8-9, message identifier such as user ID, IP addresses, timestamp, date or terminal ID are inherently included in an email.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to DAVID Y. ENG whose telephone number is 571-272-3984. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F from 8AM to 3PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, SALEH NAJJAR, can be reached on 571-272-4006. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).



DAVID Y. ENG  
PRIMARY EXAMINER